

THE PICTURE OF DORIAN GRAY 213

grotesque misshapen shadow on the spotted carpet that it had not stirred, but was still there, as he had left it.

He heaved a deep breath, opened the door a little wider, and with half-closed eyes and averted head walked quickly in, determined that he would not look even once upon the dead man. Then, stooping down, and taking up the gold and purple hanging, he flung it right over the picture.

There he stopped, feeling afraid to turn round, and fixed themselves on the intricacies of the pattern before him. He heard Campbell bringing in the heavy chest, and the other things that he had required for his dreadful work. He began to wonder if he and Basil Hall ward had ever met, and, if so, what they had thought of each other.

"Leave me now," said a stern voice behind him. He turned and hurried out, just conscious that the dead man had been thrust back into the chair, and that Campbell was gazing into a glistening, yellow face. As he was going down-stairs he heard the key being turned in the lock.

It was long after seven when Campbell came back into the library. He was pale, but absolutely calm. "I have done what you asked me to do," he muttered. "And now, good-bye. Let us never see each other again." "You have saved me from ruin, Alan. I cannot forget that," said Dorian, simply.

As soon as Campbell had left, he went upstairs. There was a horrible smell of nitric acid in the room. But the thing that had been sitting at the table was gone.

CHAPTER XV

THAT evening, at eight-thirty, exquisitely dressed and wearing a large buttonhole of Parma violets, Dorian Gray ushered into Lady Narborough's drawing-room by bowing servants. His forehead was throbbing with maddened nerves, and he felt wildly excited, but his manner as he bent over his hostess's hand was as easy and graceful as ever. Perhaps one never seems so much at one's ease as when one has to play a part. Certainly no one looking at Dorian Gray that night could have believed that he had passed through a tragedy as horrible as any tragedy of our age. Those finely shaped fingers never have clutched a knife for sin, nor those smiling lips have